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# RESERVOIRS OF INFECTION: THE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EMERGING PATHOGEN

## PROJECT SUMMARY

### Background

Poultry are an important source of human pathogens (e.g. Salmonella) and important for the evolution of antibiotic resistance. *E. albertii* is a very recently described species of *Escherichia* thought to be capable of causing diarrheal disease in humans and implicated as the causative agent in mass native bird mortality events in the northern hemisphere. It also has been implicated as the cause of death in poultry and other captive birds. The pathogen occurs in native Australian birds, mostly species such as magpies that live in close association with humans. The long term goal of the research is to determine the primary reservoir for this pathogen. Is it humans, poultry, or native birds?

### Objectives of this project:

- This project is to further our understanding of the distribution of *E. albertii* in native birds by examining faecal samples for the presence of *E. albertii*
- Further our understanding of the flock prevalence of *E. albertii* in 'backyard' poultry flocks.
- Attempt to assess the impact of *E. albertii* on native birds by comparing the prevalence of *E. albertii* in 'injured' versus 'sick' birds arriving at veterinary clinics and in wildlife carers.